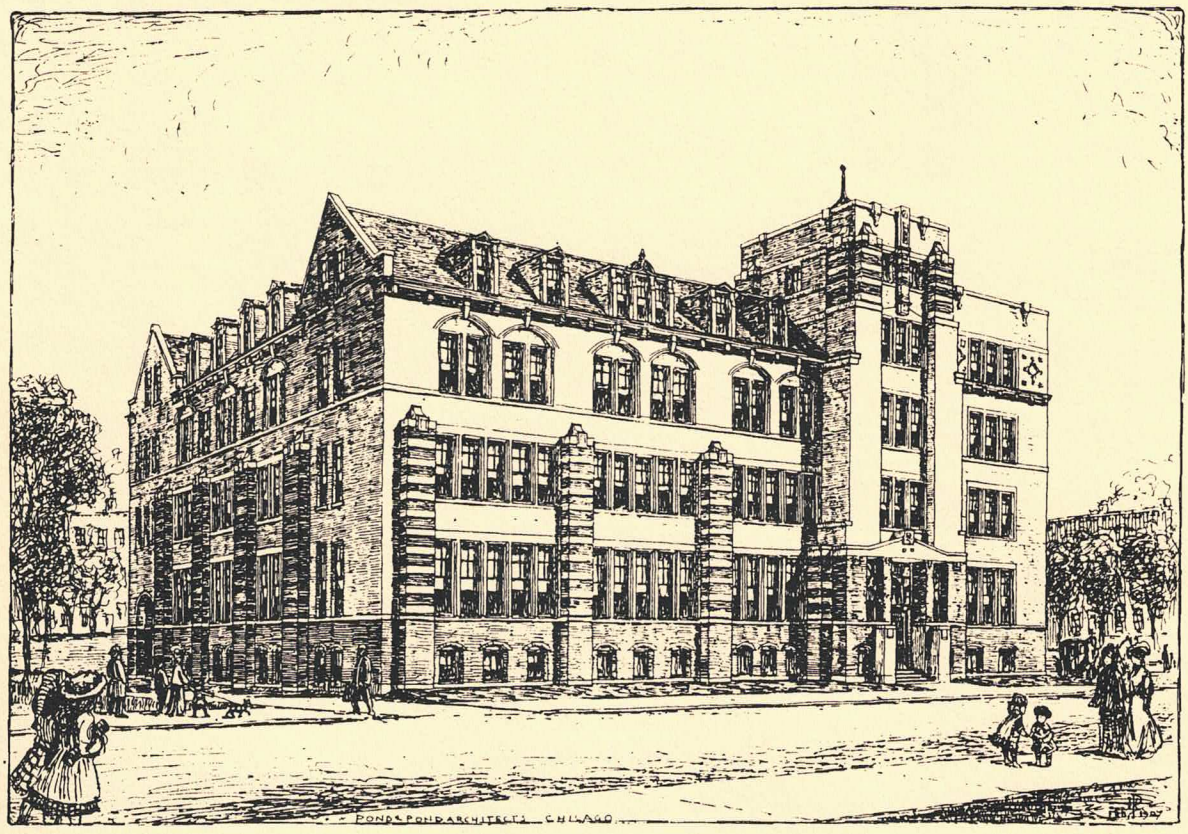
PRELIMINARY STAFF SUMMARY OF INFORMATION



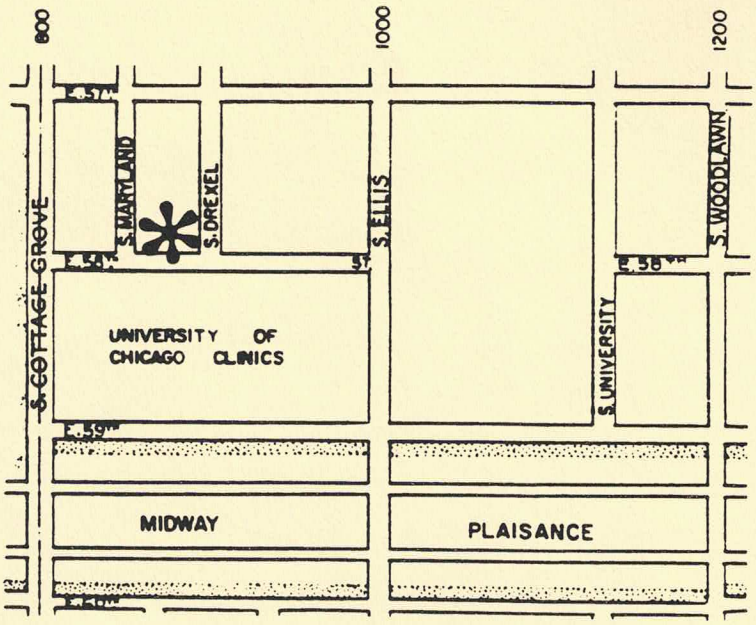
American School of Correspondence, Chicago, U.S.A.

850 East 58th Street

Submitted to the Commission on Chicago Landmarks on July 6, 1994

CITY OF CHICAGO
Richard M. Daley, Mayor

Department of Planning and Development
Valerie B. Jarrett, Commissioner



LOCATOR MAP

The Commission on Chicago Landmarks, whose nine members are appointed by the Mayor, was established in 1968 by city ordinance. It is responsible for recommending to the City Council that individual buildings, sites, objects, or entire districts be designated as Chicago Landmarks, which protects them by law.

The Commission makes its recommendation to the City Council only after careful consideration. The process begins with an extensive staff study, summarized in this report, which discusses the historical and architectural background and significance of the proposed landmark.

The next step--a preliminary determination by the Commission that the proposed landmark is worthy of consideration--is important because it places the review of building permits for the property under the jurisdiction of the Commission during the remainder of the designation process.

This Preliminary Summary of Information is subject to possible revision and amendment during the designation proceedings. Only language contained within the Commission's recommendation to the City Council should be regarded as final.

COVER: A 1906 drawing by architect Irving K. Pond of the American School of Correspondence. The detail is taken from a decorative border used by Pond & Pond on several of their buildings in Chicago.

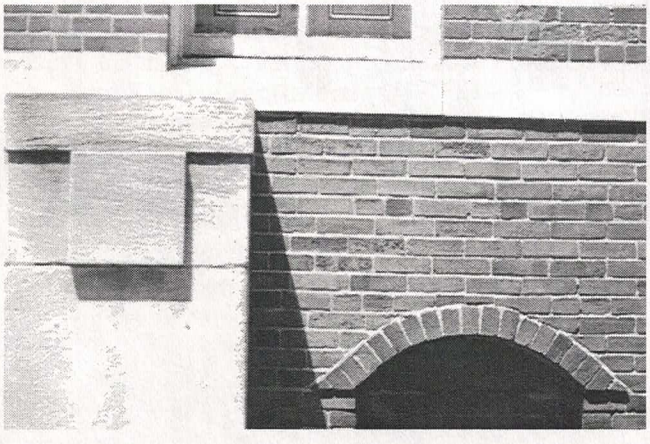
American School of Correspondence

850 E. 58th St.

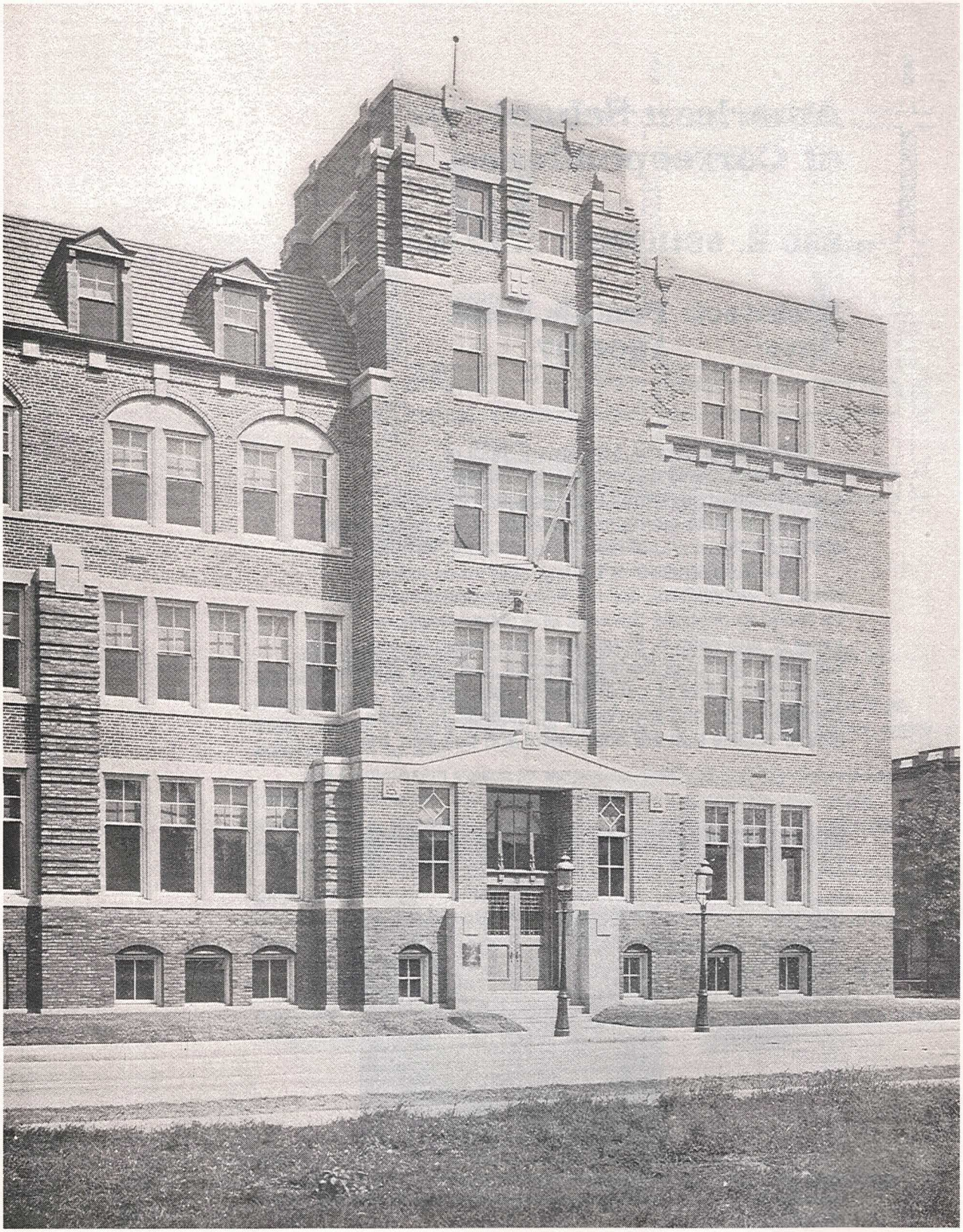
Architect: Pond & Pond
Date: 1906-07

The design for the American School of Correspondence is distinct among Chicago's assemblage of significant architecture. It is a rare example, both its interior and exterior, of the architecture of Pond & Pond and of the Arts and Crafts movement.

The word "crafted" is seldom used to describe works of architecture, but no more appropriate term can be found to describe the work of architect brothers Irving K. and Allen B. Pond, and their design for the American School of Correspondence. Just as a skilled blacksmith, potter or cabinetmaker uses personal creativity, skill, and knowledge of materials to create simple objects that are both useful and beautiful, the



From its overall design to its smallest details, the American School gives the impression of having been carefully crafted, instead of merely designed and built.



A 1907 photograph of the American School of Correspondence, shortly after construction.

firm of Pond & Pond crafted a building for the American School that interwove beauty and function through the creative expression of its structural components.

Designed in 1906 for a pioneering home education school, the American School of Correspondence is the finest and best preserved Chicago example of Pond & Pond's work, a firm that until recently has been overlooked in contemporary architectural history, even though it was nationally recognized in the early 20th century as one of the city's leading "modernist" architectural firms.

Pond & Pond was an important contributor to the ongoing debate at the turn of the century on the development of a modern, indigenous architecture. As celebrated and nationally recognized in their time as Louis Sullivan and Frank Lloyd Wright, the Ponds' approach to modernism was based on three main principles: expression of structure as an inspiration for design; abstract treatment of traditional architectural forms; and detailed craftsmanship.

The architectural outlook of Pond & Pond closely parallelled the contemporary Arts and Crafts movements in Europe and the United States. Originating from the teachings of William Morris, John Ruskin and other late-19th-century English theorists, the Arts and Crafts Movement's emphasis on humanizing design through simple, crafted forms and honest expression of materials had a strong impact on designers of the early 20th-century in Europe and the United States.

Almost forgotten until very recently, the Arts and Crafts Movement has been given renewed scholarly study and appreciation. Finely crafted decorative objects created by such designers as Gustav Stickley, Harvey Ellis, and the Rookwood Pottery have gone from forgotten attics into major museums as important works of art, while the architectural works of Greene & Greene, the California counterparts of Pond & Pond, are now regarded as national treasures.

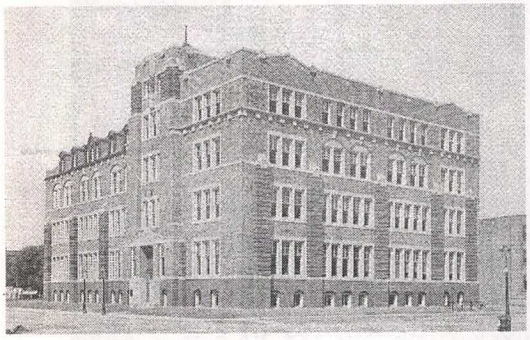
This same reawakening has led to a fresh appreciation for the accomplishments of Pond & Pond, reestablishing the firm's stature as one of the most creative and innovative of early-20th-century Chicago. Their design for the American School of Correspondence is one of the Midwest's premier examples of Arts and Crafts-influenced architectural design, as well as a demonstration that Chicago's reputation as an innovative architectural center goes far beyond the familiar precepts of the "Chicago School" and the "Prairie School."

The American School of Correspondence is one of the premier examples in the Midwest of Arts and Crafts-influenced architectural design.

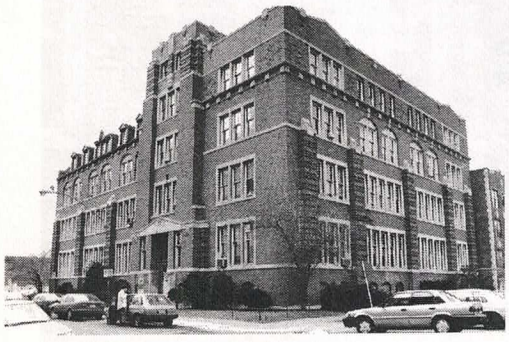
A New Kind of Building for a New Kind of School

The American School of Correspondence was established to offer anybody--anywhere--a quality education by mail, instead of in a traditional classroom environment. Established in Boston in 1897, the American School relocated in 1902 to Chicago, where it enjoyed enough success that made it necessary to construct, in 1907, a new building to house its varied educational programs.

The school acquired a large corner lot in the shadows of the University of Chicago's grey-Gothic towers for its new building. Instead of classrooms, the operations of a correspondence school required an entirely different set of functional requirements, the most important being large, natural-lit rooms for the processing of student lessons. The school also required administrative offices, extensive mail-handling facilities, and quarters for the preparation, distribution, and warehousing of textbooks.



Commanding its corner site, the American School's asymmetrical composition stands out from traditional architecture of the period. The building retains its original design integrity, as evidenced by this comparison of a 1907 view (above) with one taken in 1994.



Equally important, the American School wanted its building to appear modern and progressive, while at the same time conveying a sense of tradition and stability. Although students of the American School would rarely see the building first hand, its visual image would figure prominently in advertisements and promotional materials intended to instill public confidence in obtaining an education-by-mail that was comparable to established classroom institutions.

The American School's selection of Pond & Pond as architects possibly came through their mutual involvement in the Jane Addams' Hull House settlement, a community-oriented institution established to benefit the immigrant poor of Chicago's near West Side. The Ponds were architects of the Hull House campus, and active participants in the settlement's varied social reform programs, which included graded extension classes offered by the American School.

The American School's democratic "education-for-all" ideals dovetailed with the Ponds' personal interest in social reform issues, while the challenge of designing a new building that merged modern needs with academic tradition gave the brothers the opportunity to express their own architectural ideals. The resulting building proved to be Pond & Pond's Chicago masterpiece, codifying within a single structure their hopes and aspirations for modern American architecture.

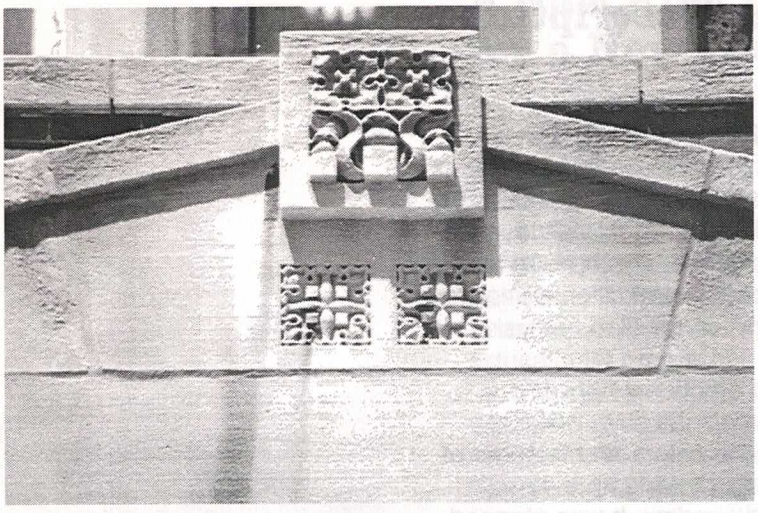
Exterior Building Description

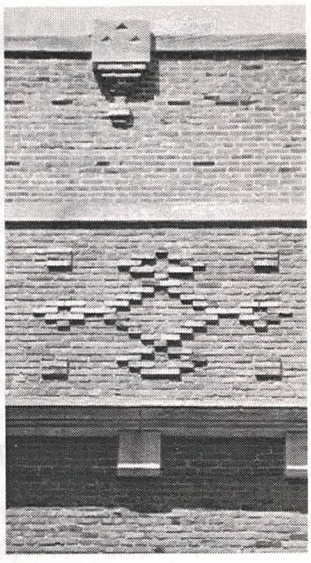
The American School of Correspondence commands its corner site at 58th and Drexel with a strongly massed composition executed in two shades of face brick, with Bedford limestone trim. While admirably succeeding in its intended role as a highly visible symbol for the School, its design was much more than a mere picturesque symbol. Closer examination reveals a carefully crafted design that invites detailed analysis down to its very last brick.

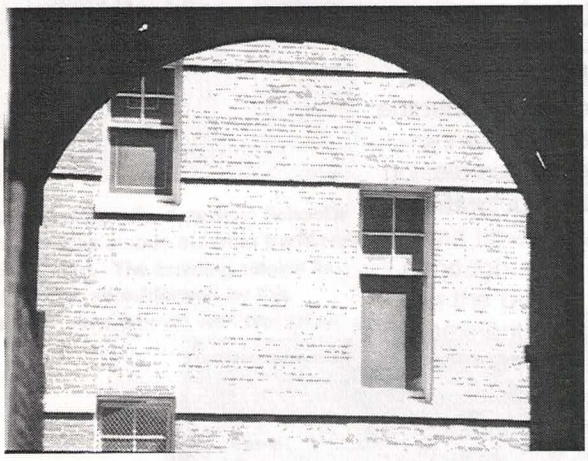
The building has a broad emotional appeal due to its warm use of masonry materials. Its asymmetrical, towered-massing is dramatic, the colors and textures of its materials bold, and its details provide an ever-changing interplay of light and shadow. It was planned, and continues today, as "comfortable" modern architecture.

Every aspect of the American School's exterior design was predicated on honestly expressing that the walls were a solid, self-supporting shell of masonry without internal framing. More than a direct expression of structure, however, the references to structural

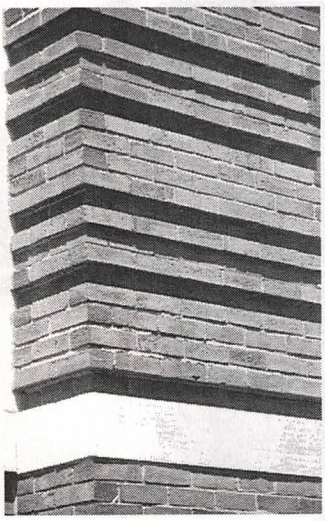
The elaborate details of the building's main tower suggest anthropomorphic facial features.

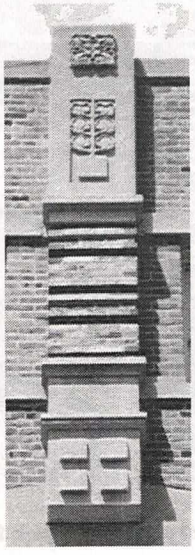






Pond & Pond developed their own symbolic ornamentation, with naturalistic forms and geometric squares juxtaposed to express conflicts between human creativity and immovable realities of life. Much of their ornamental effects derived from the inherent character of materials, such as ornamental brick patterning and coursing.





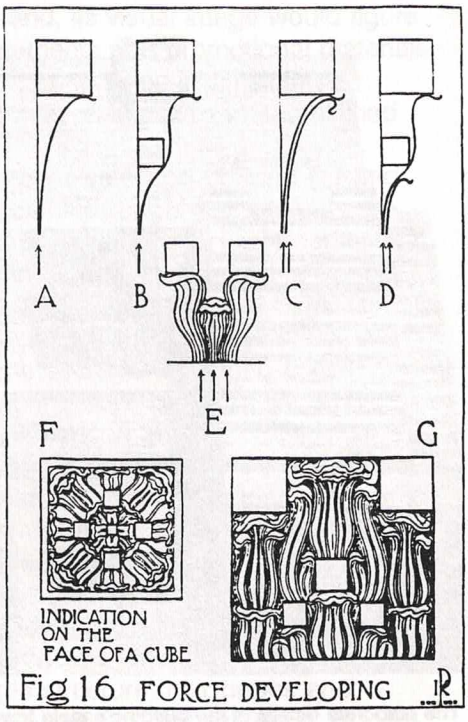


Fig 16 FORCE DEVELOPING

features were motivated by their effect in creating a pleasing aesthetic composition.

The large buttresses spread across all of the elevations, while beautiful in detail, also have a direct function. Similar to the way in which buttresses allowed the walls of Medieval cathedrals to be opened up for large stained glass windows, projecting thickened piers on the American School open up its masonry walls to large modern ribbons of glass on the first and second floors to illuminate the workrooms within.

Window openings throughout are supported by structural arches and post-and-lintel stone framing. The contrast of the dark brick with the stone window enframements on the first and second floors gives the design further interest.

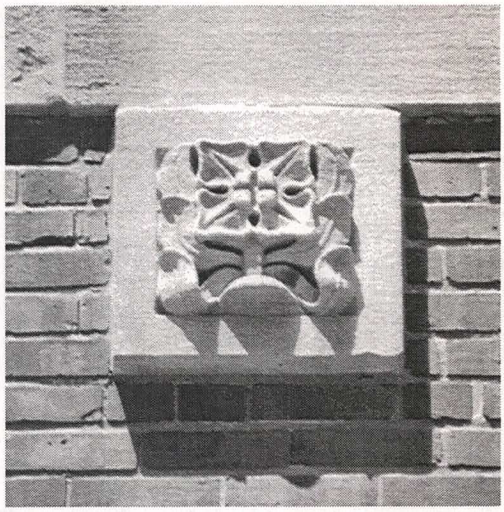
The stepped-back verticality of the entrance tower and the projecting masonry piers contribute to the building's imposing visual presence. The form of the tower highlights its structure: The width of the vertical piers diminishes with the height of the tower, expressing the diminishing structural loads inherent in multi-story masonry construction.

The Ponds' design for the American School also highlights the craftsmanship inherent in masonry construction. Simple variations in surface planes, fenestration, materials, and color give rhythmic interest to the facade, while visually reinforcing the building's structural and functional identity. Two colors of paving brick were used to distinguish what the Pond Brothers often referred to areas of structural "strength" and "repose" in the exterior masonry walls. Dark, purplish-brown brick visually defines the building's base and the concentrated structural loading of the projecting masonry piers. The balance of the building is faced in a field of lighter reddish paving brick, reflecting its more passive structural identity as an enclosing masonry shell.

The building's strong vertical massing is balanced by horizontal elements, such as continuous sills and lintels and horizontal ribbons of windows on the first and second floors.

Pond & Pond's singular approach to modern architecture was based, in part, on the belief that modernism should evolve from tradition and context. As a result, they tempered their structural aesthetic with abstractions of traditional architecture.

The originality of their work can be seen by comparing it with the more traditional Gothic buildings of the nearby University of Chicago. The American School quietly stands out from these structures, but nevertheless is compatible, incorporating picturesque



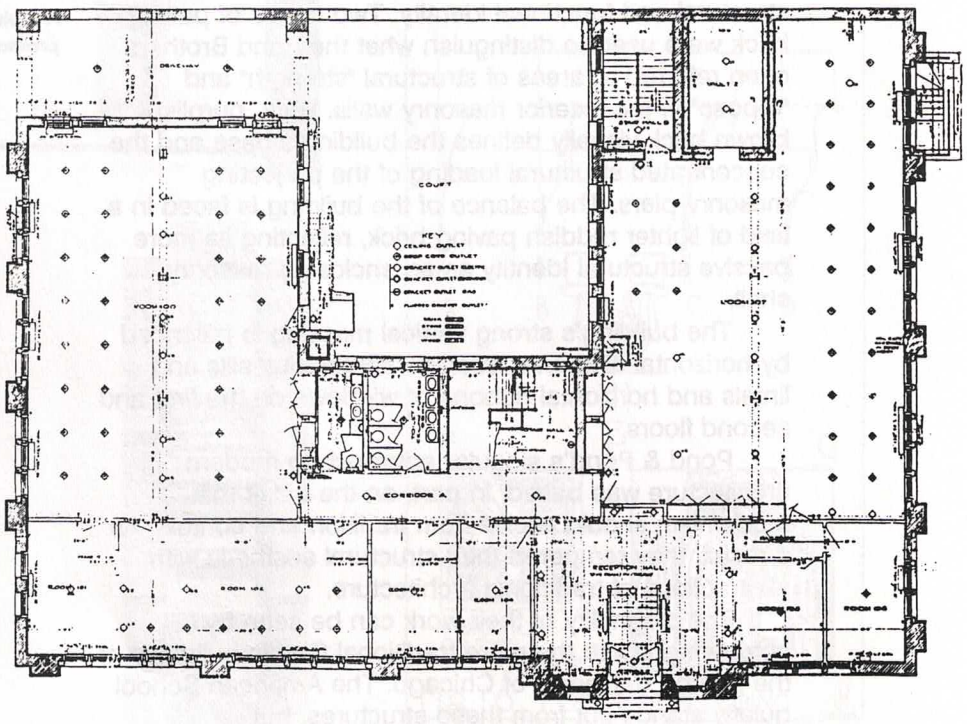
A typical Pond & Pond ornament: organic forms pressed within a square.

gables and dormers that suggest, but do not copy, imagery associated with "Ivy League" institutions of higher learning.

Like Louis Sullivan, Pond & Pond developed their own philosophy regarding the use of architectural ornament. On the American School's exterior, squares of ornament placed around the entrance and on the tower symbolically show fluid, organic forms pressing against rigid geometric cubes, representing the harmony and conflicts of human creativity and architectural structure. Similar symbolic analogies of natural and geometric forms are also characteristic of the concurrent design philosophies of the Arts and Crafts movement.

The location of Pond & Pond's ornament was often tied to structural forces, and never placed for mere decorative effect. Other ornamental effects were achieved by simply expressed blocks of unadorned stone or by the use of decorative brick patterning.

It is fortunate that little change has taken place to the building's exterior since the time of its original construction. Subtle details such as color contrasts between the brick and mortar, which gives the building its hand-built character, have been carefully maintained over the years, as well as features like the white-painted window sash and frames, and the distinctive "Arts and Crafts" green-stained oak of the main entrance.



The American School's "U" shaped plan ensured an abundance of natural light and air to the large workspaces within.

Minor alterations to the exterior include the installation of glass block in some basement windows, and the replacement of the green roof tiles with composition tile.

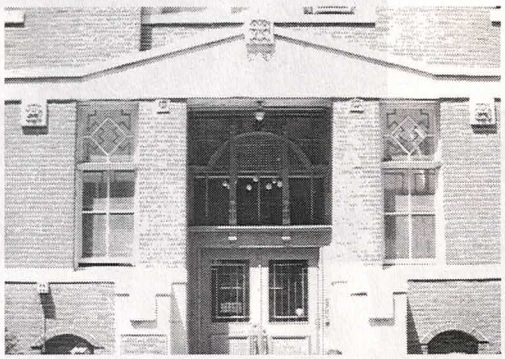
Interior and Floor Plan

The interior of the American School of Correspondence exhibits the same quality of design and detailing that distinguishes the exterior. Flowing humanly-scaled spaces definitively document Pond & Pond's distinctive approach to architecture, as well as represent some of the finest and best preserved interior spaces in the city reflecting influences of the Arts and Crafts movement.

To secure maximum window area on the building's 96 x 130-foot lot, the American School's "U" shaped plan was stretched almost to the lot lines on the street (east and south) and alley (west) elevations, and opened to a central courtyard in the center. Abundant light and air within a pleasant working environment were prerequisite in planning the school's interior spaces. To allow light and air to enter on the building's alley side, the large lot to the west was originally landscaped as a private park. It is currently used as the school's parking lot.

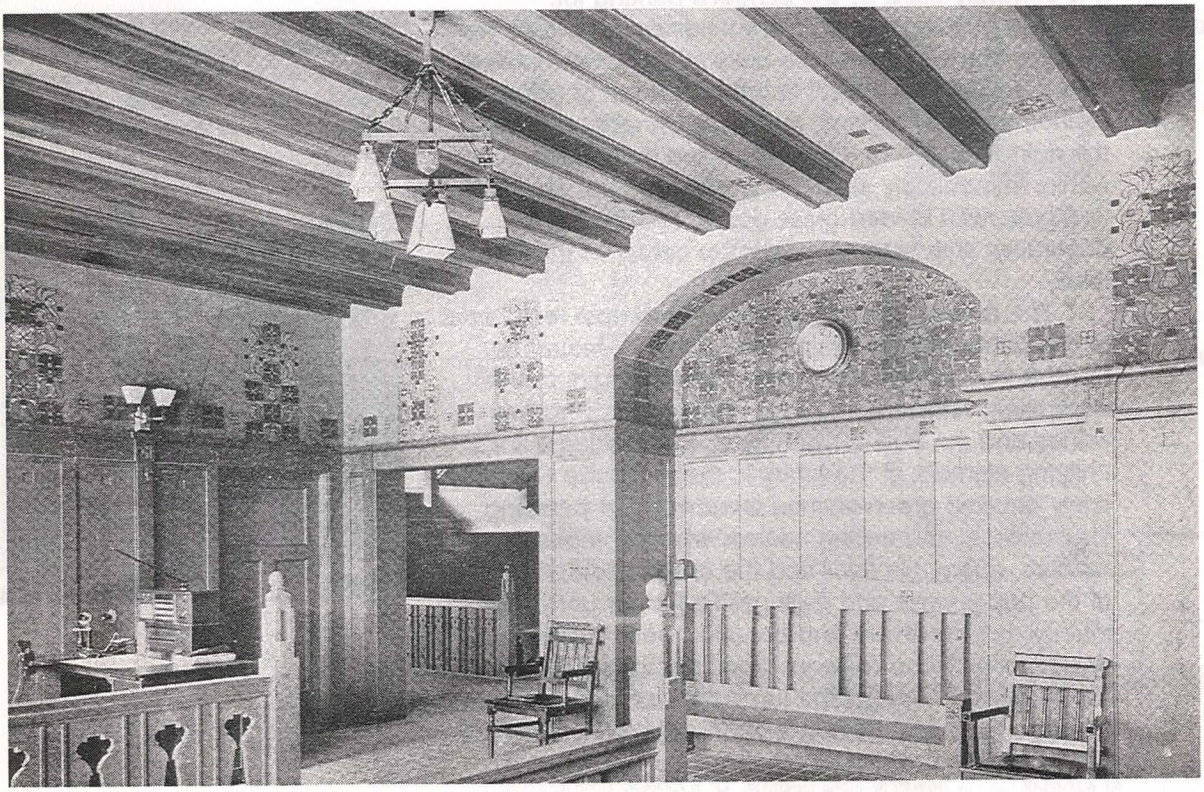
The building's main entrance is called out by a massive stone portal at the base of the tower, infilled with a delicate sculptural entrance screen of green-stained wood and glass, making a transition between the rigid masonry of the exterior and the fluid spaces within. Immediately inside, a small wood-paneled storm vestibule, with leaded glass doors, opens to a decorative stair extending into the center of the main lobby.

The overall effect of the lobby is almost residential in character, an impression intentionally created by Pond & Pond to give a pleasant environment to the workplace, reflecting the interrelationship of human values and the built environment. The predominant, unifying element of the lobby is the extensive use of finely detailed green-stained woodwork for paneling, stair railings, and ceiling beams, which complements the reddish, quarry tile floor and the rough textured plaster of the upper walls and ceilings. To further unify the interior, tables, chairs and benches were custom designed by Pond & Pond especially for the space, and are still extant today. (The furniture was featured in the Chicago Historical Society's 1984 exhibition, "Chicago Furniture: Art, Craft, and Industry.")



The main entrance (above) is emphasized at the base of the tower by a massive post-and-lintel portal, infilled with a delicate entrance screen of green-stained wood. The side facade (below), which faces an alley, was a simplified version of the street elevations.

The majority of the building's Arts and Crafts-influenced interior is intact, including the distinctive "skyscraper" stair newel posts and custom-designed furniture. Below, a 1907 photograph of the lobby.



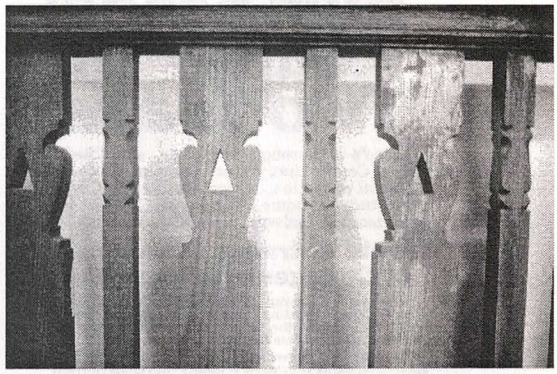
The upper walls and ceilings were originally stenciled with abstracted nature patterns executed in shades of red, green, and purple on a buff-colored background, a color palette introduced by the brick, stone, copper and tile of the exterior and thematically carried throughout the interior. (These stencils were covered over in the 1950s by either wallcovering or paint, but are likely undamaged beneath.)

Finished in the building's characteristic green stain, the oak staircases of the lobby and interiors incorporate the Pond Brother's distinctive "skyscraper" newel posts, with vertically diminishing geometric forms. The balusters are flat wood boards, animated by simple fret-sawn cutouts and chiseled notching.

Other significant interior spaces include the president's office on the second floor and the adjoining cashiers offices, finished with oak paneled counters and teller cages. Corridors and other interior rooms retain a consistency of high-quality detailing, with simple--yet effectively detailed--green woodwork that complements flat-finished plaster wall and ceiling surfaces.

Strong design influences can be drawn between the School's interiors and popular Arts and Crafts movements that parallelled its period of design. The emphasis on human scale, natural expression of crafted materials, bold coloration, and the use of abstracted nature motifs for ornamental detailing reflect the Ponds' personal creativity, tempered by Arts and Crafts design.

Another remarkable aspect of the American School of Correspondence is that its interiors remain virtually unchanged since the building's completion. Unlike most buildings of the period that have suffered extensive alterations and redecoration in later years, a large percentage of the original design features and decorative finishes are still intact, offering a rare documentation of the form and grammar of both Pond & Pond and the Arts and Crafts movement.



Decorative patterning of the stair balusters was achieved by the simple sawing and notching of flat oak boards which were stained green.

The American School

The American School of Correspondence is itself a historically significant institution. The school was founded in Boston in 1897 by R.T. Miller Jr. (1867-1958), an energetic 30-year-old Harvard Law School graduate who recognized the need for accessible technical education in an increasingly industrialized America. Miller created a not-for-profit school that would provide graded technical courses through the mail, making quality education accessible to the farthest reaches of

the country.

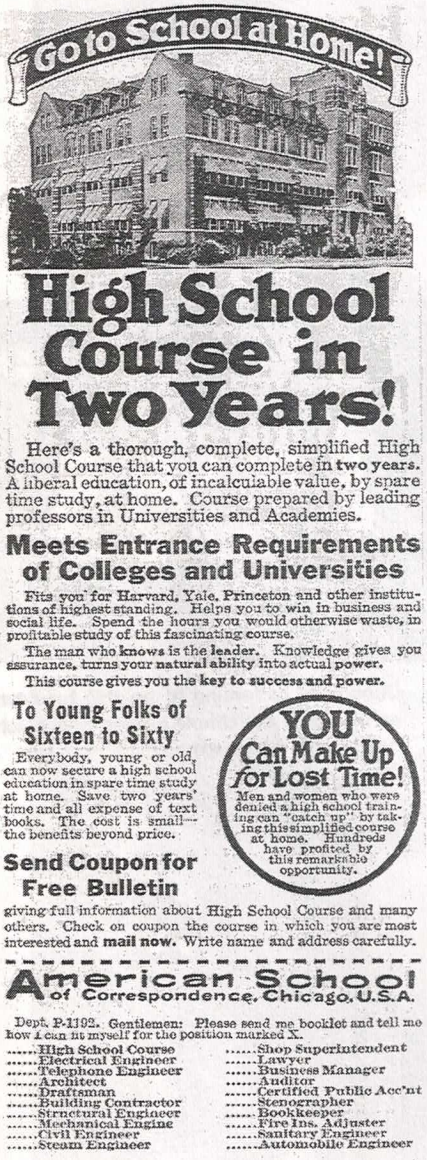
In its initial years in Boston, the American School's curriculum was principally devoted to architectural and engineering training. Miller engaged many of the faculty of MIT and Harvard to plan curriculums, write textbooks, and supervise the grading of student papers. As a result of its insistence on high educational standards, degrees from the American School were widely regarded as being comparable, if not superior, to the programs offered by traditional, classroom-oriented technical institutions.

In 1902, the facilities of the American School of Correspondence and an adjunct publishing division, the American Technical Society, were relocated to Chicago at the invitation of the Armour Institute of Technology, predecessor of IIT. While retaining their independence, Miller's organizations were given quarters at Armour and encouraged to further expand their programs as part of what was described as a "five-year experiment." In addition to expanded technical programs, the school also offered courses in law and introduced a popular home-study high school program.

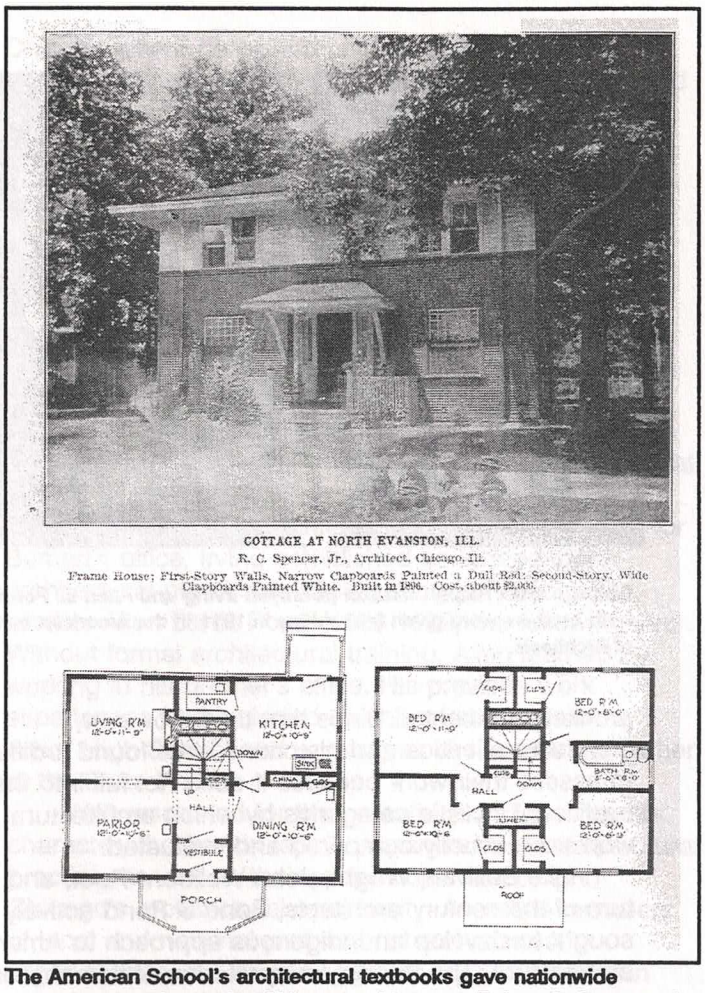
At the close of the five-year period in 1907, the American School and the American Technical Society reestablished their independent autonomy by erecting their Pond & Pond-designed headquarters. Consistent with the school's previous selection of sites in or near established educational institutions, the locating of the new headquarters near the University of Chicago campus ensured the participation of qualified professional educators in the school's operations.

The American School's contributions to Chicago architecture, however, went far beyond the creation of their headquarters building. Textbooks prepared in the early 20th century for the American School's architectural programs prominently featured Chicago-area architects, giving their work a voice in American architectural education. In contrast to the formal curriculums offered by architectural schools of the period, which emphasized Beaux Arts classicism, student lessons from the American School also included works by Frank Lloyd Wright, Robert C. Spencer, Pond & Pond, and other practitioners of Chicago's turn-of-the-century creative architectural movements. The American Technical Society also promoted these architectural ideals through the publication of books like Hermann V. Von Holst's Modern American Homes, a 1912 work that gave influential exposure to the work of Chicago architects.

The American School of Correspondence continues to successfully operate out of the building that Pond & Pond created almost nine decades ago, with the quality


Go to School at Home!
High School Course in Two Years!
Here's a thorough, complete, simplified High School Course that you can complete in two years. A liberal education, of incalculable value, by spare time study, at home. Course prepared by leading professors in Universities and Academies.
Meets Entrance Requirements of Colleges and Universities
Fits you for Harvard, Yale, Princeton and other institutions of highest standing. Helps you to win in business and social life. Spend the hours you would otherwise waste, in profitable study of this fascinating course.
The man who knows is the leader. Knowledge gives you assurance, turns your natural ability into actual power.
This course gives you the key to success and power.
To Young Folks of Sixteen to Sixty
Everybody, young or old, can now secure a high school education in spare time study at home. Save two years' time and all expense of text books. The cost is small—the benefits beyond price.
YOU Can Make Up for Lost Time!
Men and women who were denied a high school training can "catch up" by taking this simplified course at home. Hundreds have profited by this remarkable opportunity.
Send Coupon for Free Bulletin
giving full information about High School Course and many others. Check on coupon the course in which you are most interested and mail now. Write name and address carefully.
American School of Correspondence, Chicago, U.S.A.
Dept. P-1192. Gentlemen: Please send me booklet and tell me how I can fit myself for the position marked X.
.....High School Course
.....Electrical Engineer
.....Telephone Engineer
.....Architect
.....Draftsman
.....Building Contractor
.....Structural Engineer
.....Mechanical Engine
.....Civil Engineer
.....Steam Engineer
.....Shop Superintendent
.....Lawyer
.....Business Manager
.....Auditor
.....Certified Public Acc'nt
.....Stenographer
.....Bookkeeper
.....Fire Ins. Adjuster
.....Sanitary Engineer
.....Automobile Engineer

The American School's advertising, such as this one from 1918, used the building's strong visual image to give potential students a sense of a stability and quality for the school and its unusual learn-at-home programs.



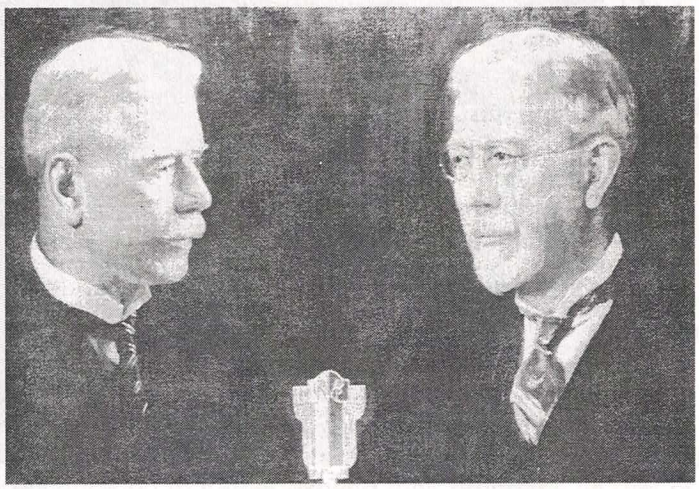
The American School's architectural textbooks gave nationwide exposure to such creative Chicago architects as Robert C. Spencer, Jr.

of both the building and the institution impeccably maintained over the years.

A large part of the school's present-day programs include high school curriculums, which are extensively patronized by sports and entertainment professionals whose work precludes traditional classroom attendance. Recent graduates of the American School include artist Jamie Wyeth, tennis professionals Andrea Jaeger and Andre Agassi, and singer Donny Osmond.

Pond & Pond, Architects

The distinctive work of brothers Irving K. and Allen B. Pond enjoyed national exposure and critical appreciation in the first decades of the 20th century, contributing to Chicago's reputation as an innovative



Chicago artist Ralph Clarkson portrayed Irving and Allen B. Pond after both brothers were given fellowships in 1911 in the American Institute of Architects.

architectural center. Since that time, however, architectural critics and historians have found it difficult to assess their work because it does not fall into the traditional stylistic categories by which architectural works are usually compared and evaluated.

Like Sullivan, Wright, John Wellborn Root, and other turn-of-the-century architects, Pond & Pond actively sought to develop an indigenous approach to American architecture. The Ponds' interpretation of this challenge was characterized by an emphasis on human values, an honest expression of structure and function, and an intimate understanding of the architectural past and present.

Their architecture was impacted as much by their progressive outlook on social issues as it was by their acute architectural sensibilities. As children of the warden of the State Prison at Jackson, Michigan, Irving and Allen Pond spent much their formative years within the environment of prison walls. As a result of their early exposure to these extreme conditions, both Ponds developed strong social consciousness that resulted in their later involvement with the Hull House settlement and other organizations devoted to social reform. Their humanistic attitudes were reflected in buildings that intimately related to their occupants and to their communities.

Irving Kane Pond (1857-1939) was the eldest brother, and the principal designer for the Pond & Pond firm. Graduating in 1879 from the University of Michigan with a degree in civil engineering, Pond moved to

Chicago where he gained first-hand architectural experience in the offices of William LeBaron Jenney and Solon S. Beman.

Joining Beman's office as chief draftsman in 1880, Pond gained valuable experience by assisting with the design and construction of the Town of Pullman. Challenged by the rapid construction of an entire planned community south of the Chicago city limits, Pond learned how to effectively use materials and detailing to achieve maximum visual effect at a modest cost. Simple variations in brick color and coursing, with changes in surface planes and rooflines, gave interest and variety to the overall composition of the town, a lesson that carried into Pond & Pond's later architectural works.

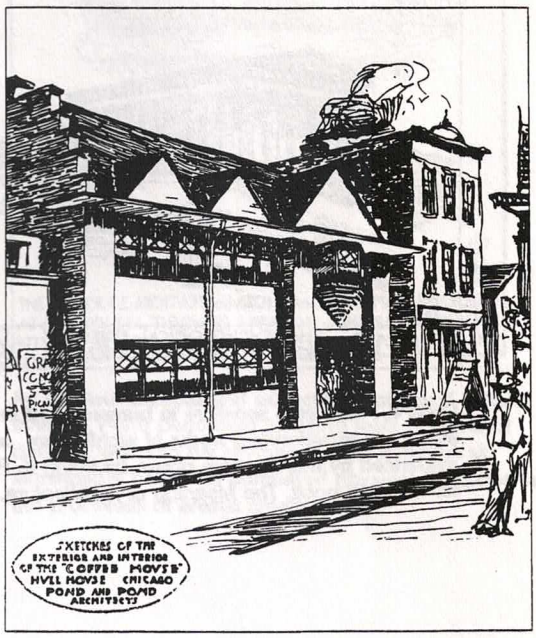
After five years as chief draftsman and designer for Beman's office, Irving established an independent architectural practice in 1885, taking in his younger brother Allen Bartlit Pond (1858-1929) the following year. Without formal architectural training, Allen learned by working in his brother's office. His previous work experiences had included teaching Latin at the Ann Arbor High School and working as assistant to his father at the State Prison.

Well respected for their creativity and personable character, the Ponds rapidly expanded their architectural practice, as well as their professional standing in Chicago's architectural community. As active members of local and national professional architectural organizations, the Ponds aggressively participated in ongoing theoretical discussions regarding the development of an indigenous American architectural style. Through the extensive publication of their buildings and essays in national architectural periodicals, the Ponds became an influential voice in American architectural thought and practice.

The Ponds firmly believed that art and architecture must naturally evolve out of the life and civilization of which it is a part. Rather than affecting a stylistic identity--either from a superficial originality or the use of revival styles--the Ponds felt that American architecture should evolve from a simple expression of function and technology, derived from the fundamental characteristics of construction and materials, creatively assembled into expressive forms.

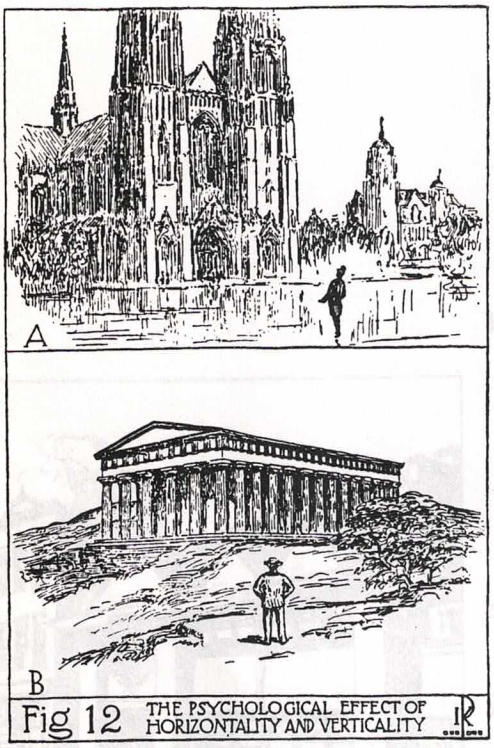
Writing in the June 1909 Western Architect, Irving K. Pond wrote:

> Architecture is a builded beauty--not sculpted beauty, not painted beauty, not vocalized beauty, but builded beauty.



A sketch by Irving K. Pond of a building for the Hull-House settlement complex.

The shaping of structure on this plan (one which "compels" a beautiful elevation) in logical manner and in imaginative and appealing form constitutes real architectural practice."



Pond & Pond were sensitive to human emotions evoked in experiencing works of architecture, as evidenced by this diagram drawn by Irving K. Pond for his 1918 book, *The Meaning of Architecture*.

Although Pond & Pond advocated originality of expression over literal duplication of the architectural past, they nevertheless felt that the architecture of other cultures embodied vital concepts that were relevant to contemporary architecture. Their perspective was based on a broad knowledge of architectural history and contemporary works gained from European travel and books and periodicals.

From the simple, expressive forms of ancient Greek architecture, the Pond brothers found valuable lessons in proportion, scale, and expression structure. The value of simple, well-executed masonry was gained from early English and colonial American architecture, while the polychromatic facades of Venice demonstrated how buildings could be enhanced by the effective use of different colored materials. These and countless other lessons of the past found their way into Pond & Pond's rich palette of architectural expression.

Especially influential were the turn-of-the-century Arts and Crafts movements of Europe and America, which emphasized the humanizing of art and architecture through craftsmanship and the natural expression of materials. Such architects as C.R. Ashbee, Edwin Lutyens, and C.F.A. Voysey shared the Ponds' admiration for buildings that expressed function and structure in a unified and simple manner.

Pond & Pond were also among the first American architects to recognize the innovative works of the Secession movements in Germany and Austria. Upon viewing the work of J.M. Olbrich and others at the German exhibit at the 1904 St. Louis World's Fair, Irving K. Pond wrote an influential article for the Architectural Record in 1905, one of the earliest American essays on the Secession movement.

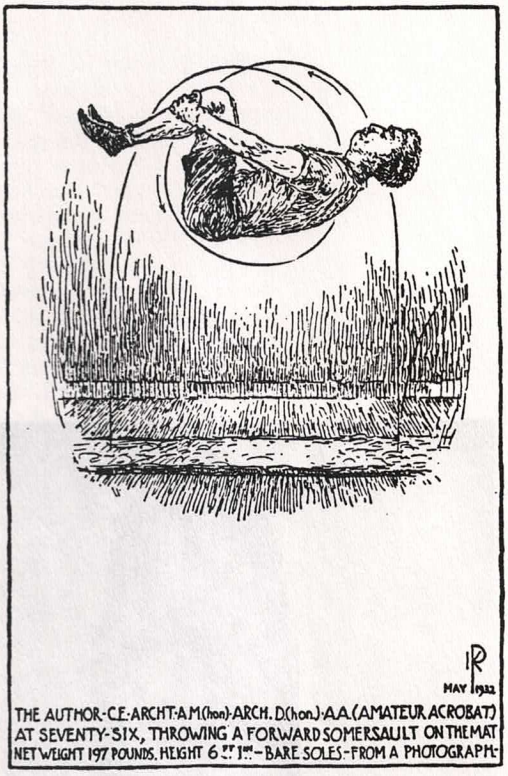
Ironically, Pond & Pond often disagreed with many of their Chicago contemporaries. The Ponds observed that the abstracted surface planes of buildings designed by Sullivan, Wright, and other practitioners of the Chicago and Prairie schools sometimes negated the realities of their structural and functional identities. Despite their conflicting views, the Ponds were respected by their contemporaries, who viewed them as presenting a different, yet valid, interpretation of a common objective. Even Sullivan, who was often at odds with Irving Pond, once acknowledged to his young draftsman, John Demuth, that the Ponds' work was an example of a highly personal approach to American architecture.

Through their prolific buildings and writings, Pond & Pond commanded a major presence in the national architectural community for over 50 years. Initially engaged in the design of small houses and commercial buildings in Chicago, the firm's reputation later expanded to national prominence. Much of this work was for colleges and universities, including the University of Michigan Union at Ann Arbor and the Purdue University Union at West Lafayette, Indiana.

In recognition of their architectural contributions, both Ponds were elevated to Fellowship status in the American Institute of Architects, an organization in which Irving K. Pond once held the post of national president.

The firm of Pond & Pond continued with the two brothers as partners until 1925, when Albert L. Lloyd and Edgar Martin (a former partner of the firm of Schmidt, Garden, and Martin) were admitted to the practice. Following the death in 1929 of his brother, Allen, Irving continued the firm with Edgar Martin until his retirement, in 1935, at the age of 78.

Irving was a colorful figure in Chicago's cultural life. Many historical accounts recall his dexterity in amateur acrobatics and physical culture. Even when nearing his eighties, Pond would astound his colleagues with difficult back-flips, including a dramatic "handstand" entry down the grand staircase of the Opera House at that building's opening in 1929. He also could reportedly make--and critique--architectural drawings while balanced upside-down at the edge of a drafting board. While seeming physically invulnerable, Irving's health rapidly declined after being hit by a truck. He died in 1939.


IKP
MAY 1932
THE AUTHOR-C.E.:ARCHT:A.M.(hon)-ARCH. D.(hon.)-A.A.(AMATEUR ACROBAT)
AT SEVENTY-SIX, THROWING A FORWARD SOMERSAULT ON THE MAT
NET WEIGHT 197 POUNDS. HEIGHT 6 FT. 1 IN. - BARE SOLES - FROM A PHOTOGRAPH:

An amateur acrobat and advocate of physical culture, Irving K. Pond performed amazing feats of physical dexterity well into his seventies. This self portrait illustrated a book that compared physical discipline to the processes of artistic creation.

The Legacy of Pond & Pond and Its Design for the American School

Pond & Pond's individualistic approach to architecture initially proved to be detrimental to their recognition in Chicago architectural history. Respected during their lifetimes as major figures in modern American architecture, Pond & Pond's achievements were almost forgotten in the decades following Irving's death. This lapse was due in part to the inability of early historians of Chicago architecture to classify the firm's work as part of a definable "school" or "style," since it

Pond & Pond's stature is shown in this 1935 mural of great American architects in Chicago's Tilden High School, showing Irving Pond with Sullivan, Wright, Burnham, Atwood, Hood, and Saarinen.

embodied a design integrity that was impossible to casually imitate.

Renewed appreciation for Pond & Pond began to emerge in the 1950s and 1960s as architectural historians like Mark L. Peisch and Carl Condit rediscovered the value of their buildings and architectural philosophies. A broader perspective has emerged during the past two decades as a new generation of historians has noted that Chicago's turn-of-the-century architectural significance encompasses a greater scope than the narrowly defined precepts of the "Chicago School" and "Prairie School."

Further recognition has also emerged from the scholarly and popular rediscovery of the Arts and Crafts movement in America, an approach to design that has emerged from obscurity to wide appreciation in recent years. The close philosophical and design parallels between Arts and Crafts and the meticulously crafted designs of Pond & Pond has established their buildings as among the premier examples of Arts and Crafts architecture in the Midwest.

In evaluating the other examples of Pond & Pond's surviving buildings in Chicago, the American School of Correspondence definitively stands out as a premier example of their work. Its thoughtfully crafted design reflects the firm's two decades of experimentation and personal development, and cohesively defines their unique approach to American architecture.

Other notable buildings by the firm include the Frank R. Lillie House (1904; 5801 S. Kenwood Ave.), City Club/John Marshall Law School (1912; 315 S. Plymouth Ct.), and the Bell & Howell factory building (1926; 1801 W. Larchmont Ave.). Few of the existing Pond & Pond-designed buildings in the city come close to the quality of design--and excellence of condition--of the American School. A majority of the existing Pond & Pond buildings in Chicago are private residences and apartment buildings, most of which precede the maturation of their architectural principles. Although some of these surviving houses reflect Pond & Pond's fully developed creativity, the singular nature of their usage as residences precluded the complexity of expression inherent in the American School.

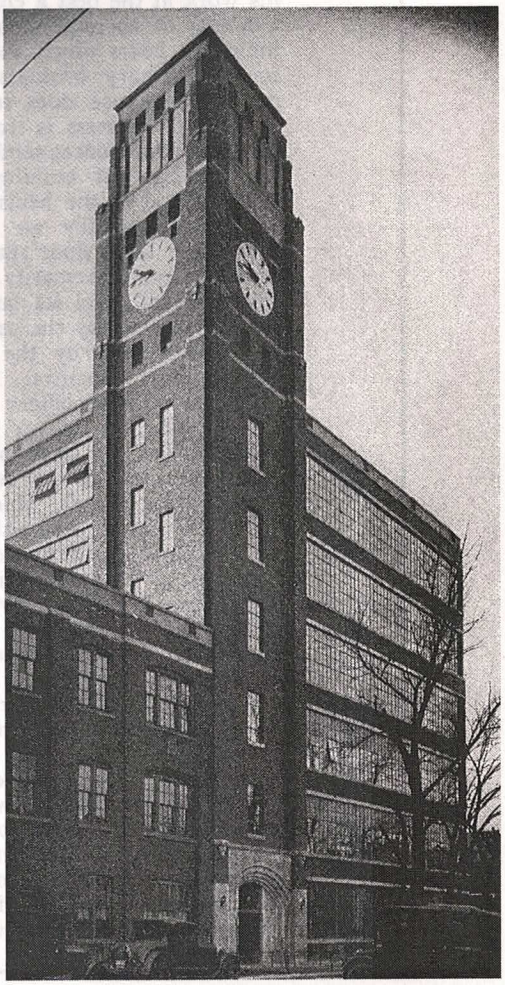
Three existing buildings designed by Pond & Pond for social settlement houses--Chicago Commons (1900; 955 W. Grand Ave.), Northwestern University Settlement (1901; 1400 W. Augusta Blvd.), and Gads Hill (1916; 1915 W. 20th St.)--are notable, but were constrained by limited budgets and the necessity of conveying a simple, residential imagery.

Pond & Pond's ensemble of buildings erected between 1891 and 1910 for the Hull House settlement on the near West Side constituted one of their greatest achievements, but was largely demolished in the early 1960s for the University of Illinois campus. The site's surviving Pond & Pond-designed dining hall gives little indication of the carefully planned architectural complex.

The impact of the American School of Correspondence on the turn-of-the-century architectural community can be best demonstrated by its publication in all four of the nation's leading architectural journals of the time. Both Architectural Record and American Architect featured extensive illustrated articles on the American School, while Inland Architect published selected views of the exterior and interior.

The Ponds expressed their partiality to the American School by selecting it as one of four representative examples of their work published in a retrospective sampling in Western Architect magazine in 1918. The American School was the earliest design selected, and the only building located in Chicago.

The American School of Correspondence definitively embodies the timeless lessons of Pond & Pond's architectural legacy to the city and the international architectural community. The building constitutes an irreplaceable part of Chicago's rich mosaic of architectural achievement, representing an innovative approach to architecture that will continue to be enhanced in significance with the passage of time.



The creativity of Pond & Pond continued throughout its career, as evidenced by this 1926 factory for Bell & Howell, with its then-modern continuous ribbon windows.

The Building of the American School of Correspondence

The building of the American School of Correspondence, illustrations of which are published herewith, is a notable addition to the group of interesting business structures which the Architectural Record has been publishing of late years, and its interest is due both to the excellence of its handling and to the more than usually happy conditions under which it was erected. As a general rule important business structures occupy restricted sites on crowded thoroughfares, and the architect has to submit to many conditions which make his work at the best a compromise. But a school of correspondence, as its name indicates, bears much the same relation to an ordinary business concern as a mail-order house does to a department store. Its business is transacted largely by mail, and consequently it can avoid the necessity of building on very expensive land in the heart of the city. It requires practically an office building, covering a large floor space in a respectable but not necessarily a very central neighborhood, and its large floor space can be obtained by the use of a spacious site rather than by the erection of a many-storied structure. It is necessary, of course, that its offices should be very well lighted, as in an ordinary office building, but the interior requirements as to the size of the rooms are of a very varying nature, which permits and calls for certain unusual variations in the design. Furthermore, inasmuch as a school of correspondence is a pedagogic as well as a business enterprise, it is appropriate that the building should express its affiliations with institutions of learning. Propriety does does not demand a design which is rigidly utilitarian in character. On the contrary, such a building will the better fulfill its purpose, provided its architecture evokes associations with one of the several collegiate styles of the past.

The building of the American School of Correspondence, designed by Messrs. Pond & Pond, admirably fulfills all these conditions. The architects have designed an edifice which somehow looks business-like without ceasing to be collegiate, and their success in achieving this result has been partly due to the spacious site on which the building stands. This site faces on three streets, and has moreover an abundance of light and air in its rear. Each of the three façades has features of special interest, but they are bound together by an uncompromising integrity of treatment. The core of the design consists of a bold tower-like projection, containing one additional story, whereby the entrance on the main facade is emphasized. All of the building to the right of this tower, whether on the main or on the side street, is subjected to a similar treatment, which is different from that part of the building to the left of the tower, chiefly because of the treatment of the fourth story. To the left the fourth story recedes and is lighted by dormers, whereas to the right it is carried through and terminates in a parapet. This arrangement is obviously dictated by the different uses to which the different parts of the floor are put; but it is as successful from the architectural as it is presumably from the practical standpoint. The building obtains a balance which could hardly be achieved by some formally symmetrical arrangement, and if the effect does not wholly satisfy the eye, it makes a strong appeal to a candid architectural intelligence. In another matter, also, have the designers been very successful. They have been obliged to supply an abundance of windows, which have very little solid wall space on their three façades, and the effect of which was hard to reconcile with the solid strength of the tower. This discrepancy has, however, been measurably removed by the buttresses, which have been run up on the several faces of the building as high as the second story. These buttresses add enormously to the consistency of the design, while at the same time they intensify the collegiate suggestion, which was already fixed by the central tower.

Early recognition of the American School's significance included its publication in all four of the nation's leading architectural periodicals. This analysis was published in the January, 1908, issue of *Architectural Record*.

APPENDICES

Criteria for Designation

Designation of the American School of Correspondence as a Chicago Landmark is recommended because the building meets three of the criteria for landmark designation as set forth in Section 2-210-620 of the Chicago Municipal Code.

CRITERION 1

Its value as an example of the architectural, cultural, economic, historic, social, or other aspect of the heritage of the City of Chicago, State of Illinois, or the United States.

The design of the American School of Correspondence makes the building an important element of Chicago's reputation for quality and innovation in architecture. Like other architects in Chicago at the turn of the century, the firm of Pond & Pond contributed to the ongoing debate on the development of a modern, indigenous American architecture. Although the "Chicago School" and "Prairie School" are the best known movements associated with that era, the Ponds and their philosophy of architectural modernism were equally influential. The American School of Correspondence is the best illustration of this alternative approach to architectural modernism.

As an academic institution, the American School of Correspondence is significant to the educational heritage of the city and nation. The innovation in the architecture of the building was consistent with the modernism of the institution for which it was built. The American School of Correspondence was founded in 1897 by R.T. Miller, Jr. as a means of making quality technical education accessible, through correspondence, to the broadest possible public. The school moved from Boston to Chicago in 1902, and has continued to operate from its present location since 1907. A large part of the school's present-day programs include high school curriculums, which are extensively patronized by sports and entertainment professionals whose work precludes traditional classroom attendance. Recent graduates of the American School include artist Jamie Wyeth, tennis professionals Andrea Jaeger and Andre Agassi, and singer Donny Osmond.

CRITERION 4

Its exemplification of an architectural type or style distinguished by innovation, rarity, uniqueness, or overall quality of design, detail, materials, or craftsmanship.

The architecture of Pond & Pond was influenced by the Arts and Crafts movement as it developed throughout Europe and the United States in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. The American School is a distinctive and rare essay of Arts and Crafts architecture in Chicago. Exhibiting design continuity in both its exterior and interior, the American School is also important for the survival and documentation of its original architecture and finishes.

Pond & Pond was an important contributor to the ongoing debate at the turn of the century on the development of a modern, indigenous architecture. As celebrated and nationally recognized in their time as Louis Sullivan and Frank Lloyd Wright, the Ponds' approach to modernism was based on three main principles: expression of structure as an inspiration for design; abstract treatment of traditional architectural forms; and detailed craftsmanship. The Ponds' design of the American School incorporates all of these principles, and is the best illustration of the Ponds' contribution to American architectural thought and practice.

The impact of the building at the time was demonstrated by its publication in all four of the nation's leading architectural journals. In a retrospective article on the architects in 1918, the American School was the only building cited from Chicago.

CRITERION 5

Its identification as the work of an architect, designer, engineer, or builder whose individual work is significant in the history or development of the City of Chicago, State of Illinois, or the United States.

The distinctive work of brothers Irving K. and Allen B. Pond enjoyed national exposure and critical appreciation in the first decades of the 20th century, contributing to Chicago's reputation as an innovative architectural center. Beginning their professional partnership in 1885, the Pond brothers, Irving K. (1857-1939) and Allen B. (1858-1929), rapidly expanded their architectural practice, as well as their professional

standing in Chicago's architectural community. As active members of local and national professional architectural organizations, the Ponds aggressively participated in ongoing theoretical discussions regarding the development of an indigenous American architectural style. Through the extensive publication of their buildings and essays in national architectural periodicals, the Ponds became an influential voice in American architectural thought and practice.

The Ponds' contributions were overlooked for years in traditional accounts of modern architecture. However, a broader perspective has emerged during the past two decades as a new generation of historians has noted that Chicago's turn-of-the-century architectural significance encompasses a greater scope than the narrowly defined precepts of the "Chicago School" and "Prairie School." In this re-analysis of modernism, the work of Pond & Pond has been rediscovered and appreciated anew.

Significant Historical and Architectural Features

Based on its evaluation of the American School of Correspondence, the staff recommends that all exterior and interior aspects of the building be identified as significant historical and architectural features.

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Architectural Record
Inland Architect and News Record
Western Architect

Additional material used in the preparation of this report is on file and available to the public in the offices of the Landmarks Division of the Department of Planning and Development.

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Chicago Department of Planning and Development, pp. 1, 4 bot., 5, 6, 7, 9
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Mary Gray, p. 18
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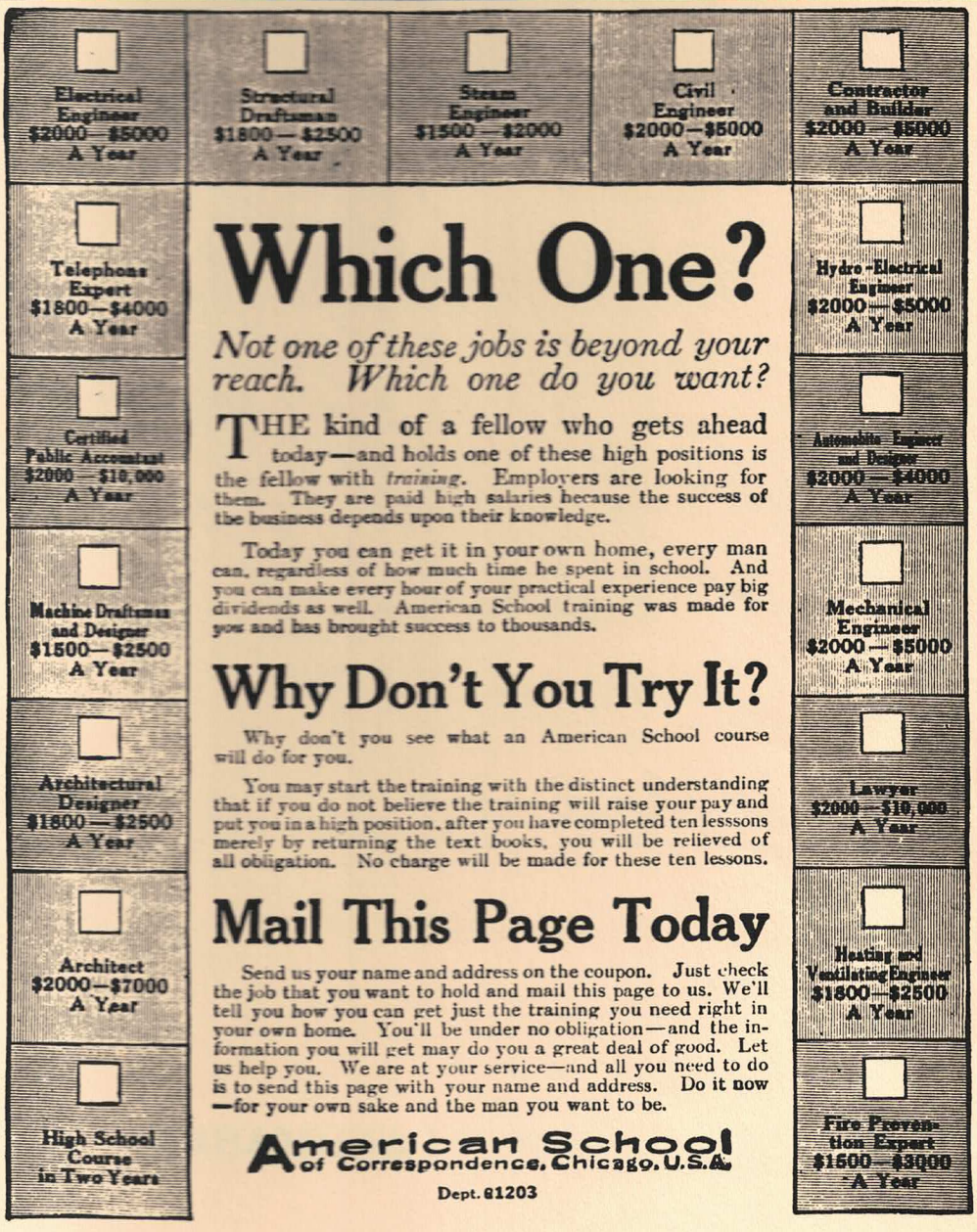
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